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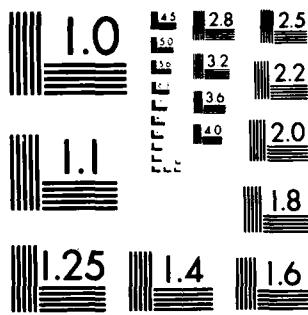
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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
		AD 129 190
4. TITLE (and Subtitle)  Education and the Army		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED  STUDENT ESSAY
		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
7. AUTHOR(s)  LTC Clayton A. Hovda		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS  US Army War College Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS  Same		12. REPORT DATE  May 1983
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)		13. NUMBER OF PAGES  15
		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report)  Unclassified
		15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report)  Approved for public release distribution unlimited.		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)  Education, Recruiting, College Education		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)  Since the inception of the All-Volunteer Force, the Army no longer recruits a representative sample of the American population. It has a disproportionate share of minorities, high school dropouts, and high school graduates who rank in the lower half of their class. To overcome the deficiencies, the Army needs a military education plan to compete for potential college students. The paper proposes a plan whereby selective recruits would receive a first year college curriculum concurrently with their initial		

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM

EDUCATION AND THE ARMY

by

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19 May 1983

Approved for public release  
Distribution unlimited

## ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Clayton Hovda, LTC, IN

TITLE: Education and the Army

FORMAT: Individual Essay

DATE 19 May 1983 PAGES: 15 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Since the inception of the All-Volunteer Force, the Army no longer recruits a representative sample of the American population. It has a disproportionate share of minorities, high school drop-outs, and high school graduates who rank in the lower half of their class. To overcome the deficiencies, the Army needs a military education plan to compete for potential college students. The paper proposes a plan whereby selective recruits would receive a first year college curriculum concurrently with their initial three year enlistment. The higher education system within the Army is functioning and fiscally funded. Under the plan the Army can offer an opportunity for intellectually motivated students whereby they can serve their country, travel, and expand their knowledge and military skills with soldiers who have similar aspirations. The plan is an experiment designed to overcome the imbalances present in today's Army.



Facing political reality, Congress in 1973 endorsed President Nixon's concept of an all volunteer force. The greatest effect of the decision has been on the Army, which relied most heavily on the draft to fill its ranks. By promoting technical skills, job opportunities, or the need for only a few good men, the Air Force, Navy, and Marines had been able to fulfill most of their requirements without relying on the draft.

The most significant Army problem with the voluntary force is that it cannot recruit a representative sample of the American population. The army has a disproportionate share of minorities, high school dropouts, and high school graduates who rank in the lower half of their class. We have primarily recruited people who need the money and a job. Under the draft, the Army received a cross sample of the American population. The following chart illustrates that the Army held its relative position in categories I and II with the Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps under the draft. Since 1977, the Army has recruited fewer and fewer categories I and II compared to the other services. During the last few years, the decline has been dramatic.

PERCENTAGE OF MALE ENTRANTS IN MENTAL TEST CATEGORIES I AND II, BY SERVICE FOR SELECTED YEARS. (non-prior-service)

Year	Army	Navy	Air Force	Marine Corps
1955	36.3	25.8	31.3	33.7
1959	33.0	41.1	45.8	31.4
1964	33.7	41.0	49.7	37.4
1969	34.4	47.7	46.7	39.0
1971	32.7	45.7	39.5	25.9
1973	31.6	35.7	44.0	23.7
1975	34.8	38.0	43.9	36.8
1977	20.2	39.3	53.5	29.8
1979	16.1	34.2	40.9	23.6
1981	23.6	38.6	43.1	32.7

Source: Profile of American Youth, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics) March, 1982

With no prospects of returning to a draft system, the Army should consider a new program of education which could resolve the balance problems. The real breakthrough can only come with

the emergence of a military education climate that enables the Army to compete for the talented students of our nation.

The Army provides many opportunities for young men and women. Under the voluntary system we must analyze why we are failing to entice talented students into joining the Army. What is wrong with our marketing strategy? The long range goal for the AVF should not rely on a poor economy for recruiting, but should establish policies and procedures to correct the imbalances reflected in today's Army.

#### Historical Review

Most nations have implemented some form of education with military training. Not only did the Athenian and Spartan citizens have an obligation to serve in the military, much of the educational system was designed to ensure that he served well. Our military education initially emulated the great European powers until the latter part of the Nineteenth Century. During the Twentieth Century we have been in the forefront of different educational programs which have vacillated between education for the individual as part of society and education which will support soldiers' military occupations.

We can trace our early traditions and conflicts of military service and education to the English. Whether the military should consist of full-time soldiers or part-time citizen soldiers, was also addressed in Nineteenth Century England. Wellington, writing in 1811, was critical of the British recruiting system and the type of men it attracted.

I believe that the government has never taken an enlarged view of recruiting. Our government expects that people will become soldiers in the line and leave their families to starve. When they become soldiers in the militia, their families are provided for. This is an inconsistency which must strike the mind of even the least reflective of mankind. The consequences are that none but, the worst descriptions of men enter regular service.

One of the most articulate critics of the educational system

in England was John Milton, and many of his concepts of combining education and military training were later embraced by Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. According to Milton's system, students from twelve to twenty-one would study such diverse subjects as grammar, agriculture, philosophy, logic, rhetoric and poetry. Military training would also be a part of the curriculum.

About two hours after supper they are, by a sudden alarm or watchword, to be called out on military motions, under sky or cover, according to the season as was the Roman wont: first on foot, then as the age permits on horseback to all the art of cavalry; that having in sport, but with much exactness and daily muster, served out the rudiments of their soldiership, with all the help of the ancient and modern strategens, tactics, and warlike maxims, they may, as it were out of a long war, come forth renowned and perfect commanders in the service of their country. <sup>2</sup>

From our founding fathers, we early adopted the concept of concurrent education and military training. From England, America adopted other military factors which have been significant to our military history: the important role for the militia in defense, the longstanding fear of a large standing army, and the determination to subordinate the military to civilian authorities.

DeTocqueville, the French writer who wrote of America in the 1830's, succinctly described another peculiar American military anomaly. "Fortune, which has conferred so many peculiar benefits upon the inhabitants of the United States, has placed them in the midst of a wilderness, where they have, so to speak, no neighbors; a few thousand soldiers are sufficient for their wants; but this is peculiar to Americans, not to democracy."<sup>3</sup> His observation became reality, for America over time has been satisfied with a relatively small army, augmented in times of crises by volunteers and reserves.

Even with a small army after the Revolutionary War, it

became clear to some that provisions had to be made for the education of at least some young men in the art of war. Washington proposed a military academy. Jefferson, while he agreed there was a need for a military academy and actually brought to fruition the institution, also believed that military training should be an integral part of all collegiate education. In a letter to James Monroe, he stated his position:

We might lament...our tardy enlistments...were we not to reflect that these proceeded from the happiness of our people at home. It is more a subject of joy that we have so few of the desperate characters which compose modern regular armies. But it proves more forcibly the necessity of obligating every citizen to be a soldier; that was the case with the Greeks and Romans, and must be in every free state. Where there is no oppression there will be no pauper hirelings. We must train and classify the whole of our male citizens, and make military instruction a regular part of collegiate education. We can never be safe until this is done. 4

Jefferson exercised his will and authority on the University of Virginia, where military instruction became mandatory. His reasoning would later be reflected in the Land Grant Legislation of 1862.

Manifesting a concern for the American soldier in education, Congress in 1838 passed a federal statute which authorized the Administrative Council at each Army post to hire a chaplain who would also act as a schoolmaster. His school activities were to oversee the education of dependent children of military personnel, illiterate soldiers and music boys.

During the early period of the Twentieth Century, the massive movement in adult education captured the imagination of many educators. The movement not only reached into American academic institutions, but into industry and the government as well. From this phenomenon, the Army Education Program began to emerge, an outgrowth of the national awareness of the value of adult education.

The Army Institute, an organization designed to provide

higher education, was officially authorized on 24 December 1941. Originally an Army activity, the institute was redesignated the United States Armed Forces Institute (USAFI) on 3 February 1943, and was opened to all services. The design included two plans for providing correspondence courses to be developed by the Institute, and courses to be provided through cooperating colleges and universities. With the desire for a more broadly based curriculum, a special committee was appointed to expand its curriculum. A committee was formed which recommended a series of courses in general education at the freshman and sophomore college level. Eleven courses were developed in the areas of social sciences, natural sciences, art, literature, music, philosophy, and personal health. These were the first USAFI courses developed at the college level.<sup>5</sup> The objective of the design was directed more toward the soldier as a member of society, rather than toward the soldier as a member of a large military organization. As stated by General Joseph T. McNarney, formerly Commanding General of the European Command, "the objective of the education program was to make the American soldier the best educated soldier in any Army."<sup>6</sup>

In 1956 a significant change occurred in the realignment of responsibilities within the Department of the Army. Education was placed under the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel Division. Initially education was closely related to Army Morale Services; it now became an instrument of command. Specifically the program was directed toward the development of leadership qualities in the officers and non-commissioned officers, and toward developing personnel capable of making mature judgments in complex situations. Military leaders began to recognize that as technology advanced, the need for persons who could utilize highly complex weapons systems also increased. As a citizen of the United States, the American soldier abroad conveyed an image of his country, and in this respect he was an ambassador of the American way of life. "Faced with this country's ever-

expanding commitments world wide, and with fast-moving social changes at home and abroad, today's individual soldier, who is at one soldier, ambassador of good will and citizen, must have sufficient education to understand world conditions, to interpret the significance of swiftly changing events, and to cope with the increasing complexity of his environment."<sup>7</sup>

Recent presidents have all expressed the need for further education of our military. President Eisenhower and President Kennedy were very forceful in addressing Congress on the need for higher education. In President Johnson's economic message to the nation in 1967, he said: "We must make military service a path to productive careers."<sup>8</sup> President Kennedy issued the broad challenges to provide further education as necessary for a free society to survive. His forward-looking approach to education caused a breakthrough when the Federation of Regional Accreditation Commissions of Higher Education approved an extensive policy statement of college programs on military bases. The resolution opened the way to establish higher adult education programs on Army bases. The document also gave academic sanctions to establishing both baccalaureate and graduate programs designed for military personnel. By 1972, resident baccalaureate and graduate programs were within reasonable reach of almost all army personnel regardless of location.

In 1967 a new program called "Project Transition" was introduced by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. The program was vocationally oriented in design to increase the employability of separating servicemen. Because of its vocational flavor, community colleges were encouraged to develop the programs. The major thrust was to seek out enlisted men who had poor academic backgrounds and social orientation, who would not otherwise have considered college as a viable alternative, and to organize a range of activities which would be designed to stimulate, eliminate educational deficiencies, and motivate them to seek and gain admission to college.<sup>9</sup>

Education in the United States Army had its philosophical base in the concept that education was a continuous process coterminous with life itself; that the continued education of the serviceman, with minimum interruption, was important to the individual, to the Army and to the nation; that education was an adjunct to and support of military training; that education, particularly at the higher level, enhances the Army's personnel development and leadership objectives, and that as technology has advanced so also has the demand for higher and more sophisticated educational programs increased. 10

Even with the opportunities afforded servicemen, Assistant Secretary of Defense Roger T. Kelly pointed out in the early 1970's that "in one Service, of those eligible for college level work, only five percent were taking undergraduate college courses. We must improve our educational opportunities and catch up with the rest of America if our volunteer armed forces are to be successful." 11

#### Present Conditions

One of the largest post-secondary educational enterprises in America is under the jurisdiction of the Pentagon. The Army has over 600 programs. The opportunity to pursue a college education during off-duty hours can be considered a rich one for military personnel. The government pays three out of every four dollars of tuition. For veterans still in service, the GI Bill frequently pays a substantial part of the whole cost. But the military services have not developed a coherent and consistent philosophy of off-duty post-secondary opportunities. Granted the brevity of most military tours of duty, it might be considered unreasonable to expect that most military personnel could complete even a two-year associate degree, let alone a four-year baccalaureate degree, on a part-time basis during their military obligation.

From World War II until 1974, the major agency for making correspondence courses available to military personnel was USAFI. Rocked by charges of redundancy and ineptitude, USAFI was discontinued in 1974 and was replaced by DANTES (Defense Activities for Non-traditional Education Support). One of the present problems is the marked disparity of academic course offerings. "Laboratory sciences, for example, are rarely, if ever, available

on military bases. Humanities courses, especially in the arts, philosophy, and literature, are rarely available to the military personnel."<sup>12</sup> Off-duty education appears to be viewed as peripheral to the central thrust of military activities; and so much faith is placed in civilian accreditation agencies that little attention has been given by the services to monitoring the quality of on-base collegiate programs.

In Stephen Bailey's review of academic quality control on military bases, he discovered a huge variance in quality control from base to base.

All too many civilian and military personnel associated with off-duty post-secondary programs, as educational service officers or educational counsellors, are reluctant dragons or weary time-servers. Those who have real and/or any semblance of adequate professional qualifications stand out, partly because they are so few in number. Low pay levels for many education officers and associates are partly to blame. <sup>13</sup>

Higher education is not integrated into training, but is provided as an off-duty activity without a reputation for quality. Even with an education system in place, even with the government paying three out of four dollars in tuition costs, the present system is not conducive to recruiting high quality personnel.

The basic hypothesis of the all-volunteer force is the transition from an army institution model to one resembling an army occupation model. Supply and demand prevail. Serving in the military is considered a job, not a career. Army job vacancies compete with civilian job vacancies. Reenlistment bonuses to retain highly skilled technicians appear to work. Off-scale pay for physicians has been in effect for many years. Since 1981, the slow economy has also improved recruiting standards. But as economists predicted, an Army staffed through money incentives can retain highly qualified personnel, but recruits people who most need the money.

The military institutions still operate under a set of

assumptions more consistent with a conscriptive force. These assumptions, primarily based on a closed system approach to personnel recruitment and development, are reflected in (1) the dependence on recruitment of unskilled persons as a major source of manpower, with recruits occupying the lowest rung of a unilinear career ladder; (2) a reliance, with few exceptions, on in-house training for development of trained manpower; (3) a de-emphasis on the relevance of civilian skills and experience in the performance of virtually all military occupational roles; and, (4) the expectation of a generalized commitment of participants to the military for a long-term career.<sup>14</sup>

The institutional model which has so long been a part of the Army military community comes under increasing critical analysis with the All Volunteer Force. The old assumptions which applied to a conscripted force should be replaced by a new set of assumptions which apply more appropriately to an All Volunteer Force: (1) we need skilled, intellectually motivated personnel; (2) many technical skills can be acquired in civilian schools at less cost to the Army; (3) we need to recruit people who already have civilian training in skills needed by the Army, such as air traffic controllers, at civilian pay scales; and (4) turnover of personnel is desirable in the combat arms, instead of concentrating on retention and retraining of combat arms personnel into new military occupational skills.

American youth are generally not receptive to military service. Those who say they would enlist for military service of any kind have a demographic profile that differs from those who have no interest in serving. Both the Market Facts and the Associates for Research in Behavior Tracking Studies show that young people with positive propensities to enlist are, relative to those with negative propensities: (1) lower in education (2) younger and more often single (3) more often non-white (4) lower in socio-economic status (5) more often in the labor

force but with less stable employment histories (e) friendlier with others who are also thinking about joining a military service.<sup>15</sup> The educational and mental capacities possessed by the enlisted personnel of the active army force have also fallen off substantially since the end of the draft. At the same time, minority representation in the enlisted active force of the Army has increased dramatically, raising serious questions as to whether minorities should be asked to shoulder a greatly disproportionate share of the burden and risks to a military service.<sup>16</sup>

Since the inception of the all-volunteer force, about one in three service members failed to complete initial enlistments. Since 1973 over 600,000 young people have been prematurely discharged from the military for reasons of discipline, personality disorder, job ineptitude, etc. The striking findings are that high school graduates are twice more likely than high school dropouts to complete their enlistment.<sup>17</sup> Last year 14% of the enlisted personnel did not have a high school diploma; nearly 58% of AF-1's still read below the ninth grade level; and up to 70% of the soldiers entering NCOES (Non Commissioned Officer Education Skills) fail due to basic skill deficiencies, with the highest rate in BNCC (Basic Non-Commissioned Officer Course).

To compound the problems, the 17-21 year old population will be declining over the next decade. The smaller number of males means more intense competition for high school graduates among colleges, vocational schools, private employers, and the military. The competition for quality personnel will be even more intense than the competition for quantity. To assist in attracting the required quality personnel, a new program is needed. The program must be capable of competing with the many federally funded grants and loans which do not presently carry the requirement for public service, thereby attracting people who desire to further their education.

#### New Proposal

The military can compete for potential college freshmen and work toward an Army truly representative of the American

population. The higher education system within the military is firmly entrenched, operational, and fiscally funded. Rather than use educational incentives to compete with the labor force, the Army should consider using educational funds, incentives, and organization to compete for the talented potential college students. An all volunteer force can resemble a conscripted force in terms of balance.

To initiate a first year college program concurrently with the soldiers' initial three-year enlistment, I propose that the Army experiment with two or three divisions which have units in both CONUS and Germany, under the new regimental system. To be eligible for enlistment, the soldier would have to graduate in the upper half of his high school class; have taken at least one, preferably two years of German; have scored at least 900 or above in the SAT test. The military over a three-year period would provide, on and off duty time, one year of basic first year college courses - English Composition, Sociology, Calculus, German, and one elective - with academic standards throughout the three-year enlistment consistent with the quality of education found at the best institutions of higher learning.

As Chief of Staff of the United States Army General Moyer has stated:

To achieve personnel stabilization, first-term soldiers would be assigned to a unit for three years. Under the unit manning system, these soldiers...who train and work together...are assigned both overseas and in the United States as a unit. At the end of the three-year period, these personnel will form new stabilized units, be assigned to other jobs, or be released from active service, as appropriate. 18

The unit cohesion factor is already in place. After Advanced Individual Training, the soldiers would be assigned to a unit for the remaining time of his/her enlistment. During the CONUS phase of the enlistment, the soldier would complete the laboratory sections of education which may be difficult to complete overseas. A time schedule of courses could be generated to fit the sequence

of time spent in the United States and Germany. Serious-minded service men and women could find academic pursuits a relief from the often tedious routines of military life.

Young adults gravitate toward others who have similar interests. Academically motivated students have the stamina, strength and endurance to compete physically and mentally within both Army and academic standards. The new regimental system, travel opportunities, and elan would entice a high number of academically oriented students to participate in military service, because the Army would challenge them mentally and physically. Under the regimental system we can offer an alternative to academically talented students in that the Army has a plan whereby they can serve their country, travel, and expand their intellectual horizons with other soldiers who have similar aspirations.

The plan is an experiment designed to overcome the imbalances within our present Army personnel. Working within the parameters of the All Volunteer Force, we should strive to overcome the moral and social consequences of our talented students avoiding military service. The Army has a difficult time competing with the Air Force and the Navy under our present system, because many Army skills do not relate to eventual civilian occupations. Consequently, we must offer a plan which combines intellectual pursuits along with physical skills. The Army needs basic combat soldiers who should be young, aggressive, and intellectually capable of using and maintaining the new generation of sophisticated weapons. The Army needs turnover to fill the basic ranks of combat soldiers, and the education plan could also fulfill the requirements for additional young combat soldiers.

With the rapid transition from a conscripted force to an All Volunteer Force, the Army has had little time to project its long-range goals for military personnel. Standards of enlistment and retention have improved over the past two years, but whether the economy was the primary recruiting incentive cannot be

determined until the unemployment rates improve. We know, however, that the Army's personnel force has become skewed to include a disproportionate number of minorities and recruits with lower test scores than we had under a conscripted force.

Rather than spend hundreds of hours of on-duty time for basic language and computational skills, as we do now with programs under the Army Continuing Education System, we could spend this time, money, and energy on a first year college program for talented students. Whether the Army should reflect a representative sample of the American population is a question that must be resolved during our few years of economic difficulty, when recruiting is not a problem. The plan I propose would not require an enormous outlay of additional money, because the education system is in place and functional, with its own budget.

The Army could also use the initial three-year enlistment of the experimental group to determine what impact the establishment of a company of high achievers would have on other problems the Army faces such as desertion, drop out rates, drug problems, AWOL's. Charles Moskos has suggested "that some consensus and/or coordinated action among the elites of the military, the education system, and the economic institutions will be necessary in order to bring about the kind of change that will make the All Volunteer Force work."<sup>19</sup>

By improving our all-volunteer force structure with balance through concommittent educational opportunities, we can hopefully avoid the ancient lament of the Greeks, "There is one source, the Athenians, of all our defeats. It is that your citizens have ceased to be soldiers."<sup>20</sup>

FOOTNOTES:

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